

SACRED HEART CHURCH
Seventh Avenue
Jeannette
Westmoreland County
Pennsylvania

HABS No. PA-6162

HABS
PA
65-JEAN,
72-

PHOTOGRAPHS

Historic American Buildings Survey
National Park Service
Department of the Interior
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ADDENDUM TO:
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WRITTEN HISTORICAL AND DESCRIPTIVE DATA

HISTORIC AMERICAN BUILDINGS SURVEY
National Park Service
U.S. Department of the Interior
1849 C Street NW
Washington, DC 20240-0001

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SACRED HEART CHURCH

HABS No. PA-6162

LOCATION: Seventh Avenue, Jeannette, Westmoreland County, Pennsylvania

SIGNIFICANCE: A high concentration of window, tableware, bottle and specialty glass plants distinguished Jeannette as "The Glass City" early in its history. Significant housing stock consists of company-built row and detached double houses, and several privately constructed dwellings.

PART I. HISTORICAL INFORMATION

As with most of the other religious institutions in Jeannette, the Sacred Heart congregation used a number of different facilities over the years. On November 17, 1889, Sacred Heart Catholic Church said Mass with its first permanent pastor, Father Severin Laufenberg, O.S.B., in a temporary wooden structure (H.E. Wallace, contractor) located on a lot owned by Michael Burton (listed in the 1859 City Directory as a blower) on South Seventh Street between Clay and Magee avenues. In late 1889, the church purchased eight lots from the Western Land Improvement Company (311' x 150') on North Seventh Street between Cowan and Patton avenues for \$2,016. By 1890, a two-story frame building had been erected for \$3,180. Services were held on the second floor, while the first floor contained schoolrooms and the priest's quarters. In 1891, four sisters arrived to open a parochial school with ninety pupils. The first story of the brick school building was erected on the corner of North Seventh Street and Patton Avenue in 1893 for \$7,000, and the original school became a convent that was subsequently razed when replaced by the present convent on Patton Street.¹ A second story was added in 1904 that contained two classrooms and an auditorium.

In April 1903, the church acquired two more lots to the northeast with a building for \$2,650.00 that would later be replaced by the present rectory building. In October 1915, they acquired lot 359 on Patton Street to the southeast of the original eight lots. The total property presently encompasses 1.8 acres (250' x 311.67').

Pittsburgh architect Carlton Strong submitted plans for the present church building in February 1923, with the building contract awarded to Edward J. Wehr of Pittsburgh for \$187,787.00 in March 1923. The cornerstone was laid in September 1923, and the building was dedicated in July 1924. The old church building became a social center.

In 1927, a wing was added to the rear of the brick school for \$36,000 that contained four classrooms, entrance hall, bathrooms and cloakrooms. Two old classrooms became an

¹ The property, lot 361, when acquired in July 1951 had a two-story, five room frame dwelling on it.

auditorium. The present school building, built of sandstone laid in irregular courses of rough faced ashlar with contrasting smooth faced Indiana limestone ashlar for the exterior and interior trim, was erected in 1960.

PART II. ARCHITECTURAL INFORMATION

This massive Gothic Revival styled church situated on a ridge above the town is visible from most areas of Jeannette. The belfry tower rises from the right transept of this Latin cross plan church with a two-story nave and one-story aisles with gothic triple windows between the buttressed aisle walls. The building measures roughly 80' x 125' and is constructed of sandstone quarried from Beaver County and laid in irregular courses of rough faced ashlar with contrasting smooth faced Indiana limestone ashlar for the exterior and interior trim. Under the front façade gable is a large stained glass three part window with loosely flowing tracery with a canopied niche containing the Virgin Mary. Recessed niches on either side of the window also contain statues of the Virgin Mary. The main entrance is through recessed double doors on the Seventh Street side, on each side of the vestibule behind the façade buttress and through each transept. An Indiana limestone beltcourse runs under the aisle windows. Natural red brick lines the interior walls below the windows, with painted plaster surfaces above the windows. The interior is shaped like the inverted hull of a ship, with red brick pillars topped with Indiana limestone supporting dark oak stained beams interlaced with shorter beams. The projecting sanctuary at the rear has five lancet windows. Hunt Stained Glass Studio of Pittsburgh made the stained glass windows after designs by Father Callistus. The Oberammergau Passion Players of Bavaria designed the Stations of the Cross.

PART III. SOURCES OF INFORMATION

Corporation Books. Westmoreland County Courthouse, Greensburg, Pennsylvania, 1388/290, 580/65, 362/4, 195/218, 192/81.

Jeannette Dispatch, November 1889, p. 4.

Sacred Heart. *1989 Directory of Sacred Heart Church*. Jeannette, PA: Sacred Heart Church, 1989.

PART IV. PROJECT INFORMATION

In February 1987, the Historic American Engineering Record (HAER) and the Historic American Buildings Survey (HABS) began a multi-year historical and architectural documentation project in southwestern Pennsylvania. Carried out in conjunction with America's Industrial Heritage Project (AIHP), HABS and HAER undertook a comprehensive documentation of Jeannette, documenting industries, housing and cultural institutions.